Greek City States Introduced

A city-state, or polis, was the community structure of ancient Greece. Each city-state was organized with an urban center and the surrounding countryside. Characteristics of the city in a polis were outer walls for protection, as well as a public space that included temples and government buildings. The temples and government buildings were often built on the top of a hill, or acropolis. A surviving example of a structure central to an ancient acropolis is the famous Parthenon of Athens. The Parthenon was a temple built to honor the goddess Athena. The majority of a polis’s population lived in the city, as it was the center of trade, commerce, culture, and political activity.

There grew to be over 1,000 city-states in ancient Greece, but the main poleis were Athína (Athens), Spárti (Sparta), Kórinthos (Corinth), Thíva (Thebes), Siracusa (Syracuse), Égina (Aegina), Ródos (Rhodes), Árgos, Erétria, and Elis. Each city-state ruled itself. They differed greatly from the each other in governing philosophies and interests. For example, Sparta was ruled by two kings and a council of elders. It emphasized maintaining a strong military, while Athens valued education and art. In Athens every male citizen had the right to vote, so they were ruled by a democracy. Rather than have a strong army, Athens maintained their navy.

Greek city-states likely developed because of the physical geography of the Mediterranean region. The landscape features rocky, mountainous land and many islands. These physical barriers caused population centers to be relatively isolated from each other. The sea was often the easiest way to move from place to place. Another reason city-states formed, rather than a central, all-encompassing monarchy, was that the Greek aristocracy strove to maintain their city-states’ independence and to unseat any potential tyrants

**Athens**

5 Important Facts

1. Birthplace of Democracy: Athens is renowned as the birthplace of democracy, a system where free male citizens had the right to participate in decision-making through a system of voting.
2. Cultural Epicenter: Athens was a hub for the arts, philosophy, and sciences. Many great philosophers like Socrates, Plato, and Aristotle were Athenians.
3. Athenian Navy: The city had a powerful navy, which played a crucial role in conflicts like the Peloponnesian War and against the Persian Empire.
4. Acropolis: This fortified hilltop was the religious and administrative center of Athens and included architectural marvels like the Parthenon.
5. Athenian Law and Citizenship: Athenian law was codified and publicly displayed. Citizenship, however, was restrictive, extended mainly to male landowners.

Role of Women

* Women had limited rights and could not vote or own land. They were primarily confined to domestic spaces and roles.

**Sparta**

**1. Agoge System: A Military Education**

The "Agoge" was an educational system that all Spartan boys had to undergo, starting at the age of 7. The primary focus of this system was to train young males to become proficient soldiers. Physical training, survival skills, and martial arts were emphasized, along with some basic reading and writing. Spartan boys entered the Agoge system at the age of 7 and generally completed it at the age of 20. This made for a rigorous 13-year training program designed to transform them into skilled warriors and disciplined citizens. After completing the Agoge, the young men became full-fledged Spartan soldiers and were expected to serve in the military until the age of 60. Spartan men usually married in their early 20s, but continued to live in military barracks until the age of 30. Couples often met in secret to conceive children. Having multiple children was encouraged,

a young Spartan boy is tasked with running a long distance while holding a mouthful of water. Upon reaching his destination, he is expected to spit the water out to prove that he didn't swallow it, thereby demonstrating both his physical stamina and self-discipline. Leonides..blah

**2. Role of Women in Reproduction and Military Support**

In contrast to other Greek city-states, women in Sparta were encouraged to maintain physical fitness, primarily because they were the mothers of future warriors. The role of a woman was to produce strong, healthy sons who could serve in the military. Women who died in child birth were given special honors, similar to men who died in battle. Women even participated in physical competitions like foot races to display their physical prowess – strong mothers made strong warriors. If a man was unable to produce a male heir, it was socially acceptable for another man to father a child with his wife, provided the goal was to produce a strong child who could serve as a warrior.

With it or on it

The saying essentially means that the warrior should return either carrying his shield in victory ("with it") or be carried home dead upon it ("on it"). In either case, the shield becomes a symbol of the soldier's commitment to battle: bringing the shield back is a sign of valor, whereas to come back without it would imply that the soldier had thrown it away to flee the battle, which was a sign of disgrace.

This admonition underscores the Spartan societal values of courage, duty, and the shame associated with retreating from battle. It is also reflective of the role that women played in Spartan society as the bearers of future warriors and custodians of the existing social ethos.

**3. Eugenics and Selective Breeding**

Spartan society was so focused on military might that they practiced a form of selective breeding. Newborns were inspected for physical defects, and those deemed "unfit" were left on a mountainside to die. This was a societal measure to ensure that only the strongest individuals grew up to become soldiers.

**4. Helots and the Krypteia**

The Spartans subjugated a class of people known as Helots, who were forced to do all of the agricultural work, freeing up Spartan citizens to focus entirely on military training and endeavors. Young Spartans were part of the "Krypteia," a secret police aimed at terrorizing and controlling the Helot population to prevent uprisings. This allowed Spartans to maintain a military focus without worrying about labor for sustenance.

**5. Social Status Through Military Service**

In Spartan society, military service was the primary route to social advancement and civic participation. Failing to complete the Agoge or to serve in the military resulted in a loss of citizenship and social stigma. Men remained in military service until the age of 60, and even dinner groups, known as "syssitia," were organized around military mess units.

Isolationist Policy: Sparta was notably isolationist, avoiding long-term foreign alliances and minimizing foreign influence.

**Corinth**

**Corinth**

5 Important Facts

1. Strategic Location: Corinth was strategically located on an isthmus, making it a significant naval and trade power.
2. Corinthian Order: Contributed the "Corinthian" architectural style, one of the classical orders of ancient Greek architecture.
3. Isthmian Games: Hosted the Isthmian games, a set of athletic festivals similar to the Olympic Games.
4. Economic Powerhouse: Known for its wealth, due to its strategic location for trade between mainland Greece and the Peloponnesus.
5. Tyranny and Oligarchy: Experienced periods of tyranny as well as oligarchy in its political history.

Role of Women

* Like Athens, women had limited public roles, although Corinth was famous (or infamous) for its temple prostitutes, known as "Hetaerae," who had more social freedom than other women.

A Corinthian column is a classical architectural element characterized by a slender fluted shaft and an ornate capital decorated with acanthus leaves and scrolls. Doric and Ionic

**Thebes**

**5 Important Facts**

1. Political System: Governed by an oligarchy that was relatively more open than that of other city-states.
2. Boeotian League: Thebes was the leading city of the Boeotian League, a federation of cities in the region.
3. Sacred Band: The Theban army included the Sacred Band, an elite fighting force of 150 pairs of male lovers, renowned for their bravery.
4. Rival to Athens and Sparta: Thebes emerged as a significant military power, defeating both Athens and Sparta at different times.
5. Epaminondas: A great Theban general who revolutionized military tactics.

Role of Women

* Women had a somewhat limited role but had more freedoms compared to Athenian women due to Theban society's more relaxed nature.

**3-5 Most Important Differences**

1. **Political Systems**: Athens was a democracy, Sparta was a military oligarchy with diarchic elements, Corinth experienced both tyranny and oligarchy, and Thebes had a more open oligarchy.
2. **Role of Women**: Women in Sparta enjoyed considerably more freedoms, including the ability to own land and receive physical training, compared to the restricted roles in Athens, Corinth, and Thebes.
3. **Military Focus**: While Sparta was almost entirely focused on its military, Athens put considerable emphasis on arts, philosophy, and the navy. Corinth and Thebes were balanced in their military and cultural investments.
4. **Economic Models**: Athens and Corinth were trade and economic powerhouses, while Sparta relied on agricultural labor performed by Helots. Thebes was not as economically influential as the other cities but held regional power through the Boeotian League.
5. **Isolation vs. Openness**: Sparta was notably isolationist, Athens and Corinth were more open to external influences, and Thebes fell somewhere in between.

**Panhellenic Organizations**

Olympics

The ancient Olympic Games were a Pan-Hellenic event that united the various Greek city-states in religious and athletic celebration. Here are some important facts that highlight the significance of the ancient Olympics as a Pan-Hellenic organization:

### 1. Religious Significance

The Olympic Games were initially a religious festival dedicated to Zeus, the king of the Greek gods. The games were held at Olympia, where a massive statue of Zeus, one of the Seven Wonders of the Ancient World, was located.

### 2. Truce During Games

The event was so significant that a sacred truce, or "Ekecheiria," was observed across the Greek world during the period of the games. Wars and battles were suspended, and safe passage was granted to athletes and spectators traveling to and from Olympia.

### 3. Inclusivity of Greek City-States

While each Greek city-state had its own festivals and games, the Olympics were open to all free male Greeks. Athletes came from as far as Ionia and the colonies in Italy to compete, reinforcing the Pan-Hellenic nature of the event.

### 4. Range of Events

The games started with only a single foot race but eventually expanded to include multiple types of races, long jump, shot put, boxing, wrestling, and equestrian events. The variety attracted athletes with different skill sets from across the Greek world.

### 5. Political Significance

Victory in the Olympic Games was a matter of great pride not just for the individual but for their city-state as well. Political leaders often used Olympic victories for propaganda purposes, and successful athletes were lavishly rewarded by their home cities.

### 6. Cultural Exchange

The games facilitated the exchange of culture, art, and ideas among the participating city-states. Poets, philosophers, and artists would also congregate at the games, seizing the opportunity to gain fame and share their works.

### 7. Periodicity

Held every four years, the Olympic Games provided a sense of regularity and unity in the fragmented Greek world. The four-year period between one set of games and the next was called an "Olympiad," and it was used by the Greeks as a unit of time measurement.

### 8. Athletic Ideal

The games celebrated the Greek ideal of the unity of mind and body, an ideal that influenced much of Greek art, philosophy, and education. This ideal was Pan-Hellenic in nature, and the games were a central institution promoting this view.

### 9. Herald and Ambassadors

Before the games, heralds (spondophoroi) were sent out to announce the truce and invite city-states to participate. This ritual underscored the games' significance as a unifying institution among the Greeks.

These facts underscore the ancient Olympic Games' role as a Pan-Hellenic institution that fostered religious, cultural, and even political unity among the diverse Greek city-states.

**Delphi**

Ancient Delphi was one of the most important religious and cultural centers in the Greek world. Its significance can be understood through several key points:

### 1. Oracle of Apollo

The most famous aspect of Delphi was its oracle, considered the most authoritative in Greece. The oracle was believed to be the mouthpiece of Apollo, and people from all over the Greek world—and even beyond—came to consult it. Queries could range from personal matters like marriage to major state decisions like going to war.

### 2. Pan-Hellenic Sanctuary

Delphi was considered a Pan-Hellenic sanctuary, a neutral ground sacred to all Greeks regardless of their city-state affiliations. Like Olympia, it was a place where a common Greek identity could be expressed and celebrated.

### 3. Pythian Games

Besides the Oracle, Delphi was also famous for hosting the Pythian Games, one of the four major Pan-Hellenic games. These included not only athletic competitions but also contests in music and poetry, underlining the Greek ideal of a well-rounded individual.

### 4. Political Significance

Rulers and city-states often consulted the Delphic Oracle before major undertakings, and its pronouncements could significantly influence political decisions. For example, the Oracle's advice played a role in the colonization movements, as well as in strategies during wars like the Persian Wars.

### 5. Omphalos Myth

Delphi was considered the "navel" (omphalos) of the world in ancient Greek mythology. According to legend, Zeus released two eagles from opposite ends of the world, and their paths crossed over Delphi, establishing it as the center of the earth.

### 6. Architectural and Artistic Treasures

The sanctuary at Delphi was filled with votive offerings, statues, and treasuries presented by various city-states. The rich collection of art and architecture, including the Temple of Apollo, made it a center of artistic excellence.

### 7. Philosophical and Ethical Mottoes

Inscriptions at Delphi such as "Know Thyself" and "Nothing in Excess" were famous maxims that encapsulated key elements of Greek philosophy and were cited by thinkers like Socrates and Plato.

### 8. Economic Influence

The Oracle attracted a large number of pilgrims, and the offerings they brought made Delphi a wealthy center. Its influence was so significant that Delphic currency and monetary standards were widely respected.

In summary, Delphi was not just a religious center but a multifaceted institution that had a significant impact on Greek culture, politics, and identity. It was a place where the various city-states could interact in a religious and cultural context, transcending their local identities and conflicts.

**Colonization**

Certainly, here are some of the most important facts about Greek colonization:

### 1. Overpopulation and Land Scarcity

The primary drivers of Greek colonization were overpopulation and the scarcity of arable land in the Greek mainland and islands. Colonization offered an outlet for excess population and opportunities for acquiring new resources.

### 2. Economic Expansion

Colonization significantly expanded Greek trade and commerce. Colonies often acted as trade hubs and helped in the exchange of goods like grains, metals, and textiles between the Greek world and indigenous peoples.

### 3. Cultural Diffusion

The spread of Greek colonies also meant the spread of Greek culture, including language, architecture, and religious practices. This laid the groundwork for the Hellenistic culture that later spread across the ancient world.

### 4. Independent City-States

Greek colonies were generally independent city-states (poleis) that were politically autonomous but maintained cultural and sometimes religious ties with their mother cities.

### 5. Variety of Locations

Greek colonies were not limited to one specific region but were spread across various parts of the Mediterranean and Black Sea, including what is now modern-day Italy, France, Spain, Turkey, and Ukraine.

### 6. Interactions with Indigenous Peoples

Colonization led to complex interactions between Greeks and indigenous populations. These interactions ranged from trade and cultural exchange to conflict and subjugation.

### 7. Civic Institutions

Many colonies adopted Greek forms of government and social organization, including the concept of the polis, citizen assemblies, and law codes, thereby extending the influence of Greek political ideas.

### 8. Religious Continuity

Colonies often took their religious practices from their mother city and established shrines or temples dedicated to the same gods, helping to maintain a religious and cultural connection with their origins.

### 9. Military Implications

Some colonies were strategically located and became naval or military outposts that could be used for defense or as staging grounds for military expeditions.

### 10. Pan-Hellenic Centers

Some colonies became centers for Pan-Hellenic festivals and games, akin to the Olympic Games, serving as additional focal points for Greek identity beyond the mainland.

In summary, Greek colonization had far-reaching impacts that went beyond mere territorial expansion. It shaped the economic, cultural, and political landscape not only of the Greek world but also of the greater Mediterranean region.

Several Greek colonies played crucial roles in the expansion and influence of Greek culture, trade, and politics. Here are some of the most important ones:

### 1. Syracuse (Sicily)

- \*\*Significance:\*\* Syracuse was one of the most powerful Greek colonies and played a pivotal role in the politics and military conflicts in Sicily. It was a cultural center and was famed for its wealth and strong navy.

- \*\*Mother City:\*\* Corinth

### 2. Massalia (Modern-day Marseille, France)

- \*\*Significance:\*\* Massalia was a key commercial center that facilitated trade between the Greeks and local Celtic tribes. It was one of the first Greek colonies in the Western Mediterranean and laid the foundations for further exploration and settlement.

- \*\*Mother City:\*\* Phocaea

### 3. Tarentum (Modern-day Taranto, Italy)

- \*\*Significance:\*\* Tarentum was strategically located and became an economic powerhouse, especially known for its fine harbor. It was a major center for trade in the region.

- \*\*Mother City:\*\* Sparta

### 4. Cyrene (Modern-day Libya)

- \*\*Significance:\*\* Cyrene was an important intellectual and economic center, known for its fertile land suitable for growing grain and the medicinal plant silphium. It also contributed to the fields of philosophy, mathematics, and medicine.

- \*\*Mother City:\*\* Thera (Santorini)

### 5. Byzantium (Modern-day Istanbul, Turkey)

- \*\*Significance:\*\* Established on a strategic location between Europe and Asia, Byzantium controlled the passage between the Black Sea and the Mediterranean. It would later become Constantinople and then Istanbul, maintaining its significance throughout history.

- \*\*Mother City:\*\* Megara

### 6. Ephesus (Modern-day Turkey)

- \*\*Significance:\*\* Located near the mouth of the Cayster River, Ephesus was an important religious, cultural, and commercial center. It was famous for the Temple of Artemis, one of the Seven Wonders of the Ancient World.

- \*\*Mother City:\*\* Athens

### 7. Miletus (Modern-day Turkey)

- \*\*Significance:\*\* A major Ionian center of trade and philosophy, Miletus was one of the oldest and most significant of the Greek colonies in Asia Minor. It was the home of several pre-Socratic philosophers.

- \*\*Mother City:\*\* Athens

### 8. Cumae (Modern-day Italy)

- \*\*Significance:\*\* Cumae was the first Greek colony on the mainland of Italy and was a gateway for Greek influence into the Italian Peninsula. It was strategically located and held influence over a wide area.

- \*\*Mother City:\*\* Chalcis and/or Cyme

Each of these colonies had its own unique significance, ranging from military and economic power to cultural and intellectual contributions. They served as conduits for Greek culture, helping to shape the ancient Mediterranean world.